

A

REVIEW

OF THE

STATE

OF THE

BRITISH NATION.

Thursday, November 13. 1707.

I Claim it as a Due, to all that argue, that they may be allow'd to suppose, what may not really be——When I have been suggesting the Consequences of the Division of our Friends, I do not say, they will be so weak—At the same time I pretend to be able to say, the other Party are so wicked, as to desire it, so forward as to expect it, and so foolish as to hope for it.

But whether it shall be so or no, I think, Circumstances concur to remind us, how much more need we have of a compleat Concurrence of all good Men, however different in Opinion; and this I cannot but fetch from the present Triumphs of our Enemies over our late Misfortunes; and before I make the main Use of our Disasters, which I design in the Naming them, let me tell you, what our Enemies expect, will be the Consequences of them, and what Use they make of them.

1. They endeavour, to possess People with melancholy Apprehensions, that **GOD** has forsaken us, that his Hand is against us, and that we have nothing left us, but to despair.

2. That made sroward by our Disasters, we will fall out about Persons, and lay the Blame of our Miscarriages upon the unfortunate Judging *a-la-mode* the Grand Senior; that to be unhappy and to be criminal, are the same things.

I will not say there are no Miscarriages, or that every Officer has done what he ought to have done; but two things I desire to offer as material Considerations, previous to your Censures, and then, Gentlemen, censure, and welcome.

1. Do not so pore upon the Miscarriages and Mismanagement of Instruments, as to forget, that the Finger of the Invisible is in all

And this, and that your Losses are the immediate Correction of Heaven upon you, for something or other you ought to reform, some accursed thing you ought to remove: Have Instruments misbehav'd, punish them? Have the Nations misbehav'd, you may see who punishes them?

2. Do not call every Man that is beaten a Traytor, lest in Time you get no body to fight for you, and honest Men shall be so discourag'd, as to bid you go fight for your selves—For, Gentlemen, if every Man, that cannot succeed, must be treated as a Criminal, who will venture into your Service? this is punishing Men for Crimes, they do not commit.

It would be very hard to censure Sir *Cloudsly Shovel* for the Loss of the *Association*; Duty and Success are by no natural Law coupled together, nor are they always found in Company; Men in the highest Posts in the World are answerable but for their Discretion and Endeavour; and to blame their Honesty, when perhaps the two first have been faithfully exerted, is *Turkish* and unaccountable, and must in the End issue in all Sorts of Discouragements to honest Men, in acting for their Country.

Oh, but the *French* take all our Ships, and with inexpressible Success spread the Seas with their Privateers; and ruin us in every Corner.

And why is this? Let me tell you why it is—And then, why, as they say, it is; 1st. it is, as I have often observ'd, because we have Ships for them to take, our Navigation is great and extensive, and they cannot miss of Prizes, if they look out. 2^{dly}. They are at all Manner of Expence for Intelligence of Things, and know when Fleets go out; and Fleets are expected every Day; they are not without their Spies among us, to inform them of every Step we take—And who can you blame for this? Spies among us, yes, the *French* would be greater Fools than we have reason to think them, if they had not their Spies among us, and in all possible Corners of the Land; and if we have not the like among them, the Cap— is ours, it has been the Practice of Nations at War with one another to do so, ever since *Europe* was a fighting Quarter, and will be so to the End of the World, and therefore we ought to do every thing, as if the Enemy knew it.

And yet I observe, we lay the Stress of a great many things, upon the Enemies having Intelligence among us, which really is no way owing to that Part of the Matter, like the *Cafe of the Devil*, I once noted before, we lay abundance of our Follies at his Door, which he really has no hand in—And so here—The *French* fell in upon our *Lisbon* Fleet, it is true—And what is the Cry? *O they were betray'd, and the French had Intelligence*. No, no, Gentlemen, that was not the Case; but had our Intelligence been as good as theirs, we should as well have known of their Strength, and of their coming to Sea, as they of ours—I have observ'd, that at one Time or other the dearest Intelligence pays its own Charge; Cardinal *Richlieu* expended two Millions of *Livres* yearly, merely upon Intelligence, and by that means had his Fingers in all the Actions of *Europe*, was inform'd of every Motion, insinuated himself into every Cabinet, and in short manag'd all *Europe*; nor is there a greater Argument of a finished Statesman, that let it cost what it will, to have a certain and exact Intelligence in all Parts of the World, and by this to take his Measures from the earliest Motion or Posture of the Enemy.

But why should not our Squadrons or Convoys of any Consequence have their Share of Intelligence too? And why should not a few Advice Boats be always scouting about to peep into the *French* Harbours, and tell us who is there, how strong they are, and how ready to come away? It had been impossible the *Lisbon* Fleet could have been surpriz'd, within one Days Sail of *Plymouth*, if the Convoy had any Scouts abroad, or if the Mouth of the Channel had any Cruisers in it.

To say, this *French* Fleet came out on Purpose for this Convoy, is to say hastily, what no body can be sure of; if they had gone to *Ireland*, and snap't the *East-India* Men in *Crook Haven*, we should have said just the same—But this is certain, whenever the *French* know we have no Squadron at hand able to fight them, 'tis worth their while to lie in the Mouth of the Channel; we have constantly such a Number of Ships coming in from one Part or another, that they cannot miss of a Booty, and of a Booty worth while also; to say, they watched for

for this or that, is a good Discourse, and useful to keep us waking, but it is easie to know, they could not pitch the Day, when that Fleet would sail, for these Reasons.

That Fleet had been ready to sail several Weeks, and had actually put to Sea, and put back again; and had they at that Time sail'd, the *French* were not there: 'Tis evident, the Fleet sail'd as soon as the Wind presented; had the *French* been at *Brest*, and the *English* at *Plymouth*, and only started with the first springing up of an *Easterly* Wind, the Fleet had been a long Way before them—But 'tis plain they knew, and that could not be hid, that here lay a great Fleet bound for *Lisbon*; at *Lisbon* lay a great Fleet bound for *England*; in *Ireland* lay six *East-India* Men, and a *Barbadoes* Fleet bound for *London*, and let the Wind blow which Way it would, they must fall in with some of them; if *Easterly*, these would go out; if *Westerly*, those would come in; and like vigilant People they put themselves in the Way of them all, by lying in the Chops of the Channel, the very gang Way of them all—And I must own, their Conduct, what ever ours has been, has been very rational.

—But our Reflections on our selves had been the same, had they met with our *Barbadoes* Fleet, or our home-ward bound *Lisbon* Fleet, or our *East-India* Fleet; Oh they had Intelligence, and came out on Purpose.

—And to prove this, the home-ward bound *Lisbon* Fleet is an Instance, the *French* lay in wait for them on the Coast of *Portugal* a long while, and why did they miss them? Because they had Intelligence of it by Scouts and Vessels abroad—It is certain, this *French* Squadron had not lain any time in the Mouth of the Channel, it had been impossible they should have lain so near undiscover'd; it seems therefore to me, in short, that they came out in Quest of the first Purchase they could get, and thus run blindfold into their Mouths.

If there is any thing to be accounted for in the Want of having Scouts or Cruisers abroad, I wish, they may answer for it, whose Duty it was, and whose Neglect is justly to be censur'd; it is most certain, that had the Squadron had Scouts abroad, they might have avoided this Danger; and I wish it may be a Warning to our Admiralty, never to send five 3d Rate Men of War to Sea, and not one light Frigate with them to run before, and discover; had these had but a Ketch or a Smack before them, upon

the Signal of an Enemy, and their Strength the whole Fleet had tack'd, and stood home again, and at least might have reach'd *Falmouth* again; if any Neglect therefore has been, this must be it, and let it fall where it will.

Oh, but the Convoy was too small—Oh but, Gentlemen, you will have all your Trade protected, and your Trade is divided into many and mighty Branches; and if you must have Fleets to every Branch, you must have a new Kind of a Navy erected; here were five 3d Rate Men of War, Ships of 70 and 80 Guns, as good a Strength as 10 Ships of 40 to 50 Guns—And if you will examine things, you will find,

First, It was as great a Convoy at one Time with another, proportioning your Strength to the Extent of your Trade, *England* can provide—

Secondly, It was as great as, and a greater Convoy than, the Usage of the Navy being examin'd, has been customary in *England* to allow in like Cases, or than is now allow'd on like Occasions; the *East-India* Men have 3 Men of War, the *Barbadoes* Men 2, the *Virginia* Fleet of 140 Sail came usually out of the *Capes* with 3 Men of War, and the *Lisbon* Fleet home arriv'd now with the same; if any of these had fallen into the Enemies Hand, you would have said just the same, that the Convoy was too small, and we were betray'd.

Thirdly, It was as great a Convoy, as the Strength of the Enemy consider'd, extraordinary Cases only excepted, could be thought necessary, or at any other time would be thought so.

But this then was an extraordinary Case, say the Complainers again, and therefore they should have been doubly strong—No, Gentlemen, you are wrong still—It was an extraordinary Case, the Enemy were join'd and made strong—Either we knew it, or we did not know it; if the first, we ought, what? to be stronger? No, no, we ought to have stay'd at home, till the Coast was clear; if the last, we ought to blame, WHO? Truly, our Want of Intelligence, Want of Scouts, Want of light Ships to scour the Sea, and look out, as the Sailors call it.—And let that Blame lie where it is due, the sooner it is examin'd into, the better; because the sooner it is rectify'd, the better.

And this, I think, is bringing the Blame to lie where it is really due, and where honest

honest Men would have it lie, as to Instruments; but will you give me leave to go a little farther, and talk to you upon another Head? Shall I lead you to the Spring and Original of all our Misfortunes? Shall I talk to you of an Enemy you are not thinking of, and show you, that you have a new Potentate has lately taken up Arms against you, which you must immediately fall to some

Considerations about; and if you do not forthwith set on Foot some Kind of Treaty with him for an Accommodation, he may go near to give a new Turn to all the present Affairs of *Europe*, and be a worse Blow to us than the Battle of *Almanza*? And for this I will hold you no longer in Suspence than to the next Paper.

MISCELLANEA.

AND what think you now, Gentlemen, if I should tell you a very melancholy Story, which yet has its Uses necessary to be made of it at this Juncture, and from whence some Consequences may be drawn, to the Edification of all those that desire to be edify'd?

Our bad News and Losses coming thick in the Neck of one another, without doubt is really and sensibly afflicting to every honest Man, that wishes well to his Country, to his Queen, and to the Protestant Religion: But would you think now, that there are a Sort of People among us, that laugh at all this, that rejoyce at their Countries Misfortunes, and say, *ab, ba, for so would we have it, Psalm, . . .* that please themselves with the Repetition of it, insult their Neighbours on their Surprizes at it, and drink to the Encrease of it.

And so let it be to the End of the Chapter, says a heavy Jack the other Day; may they drown and be damn'd, that engage in the Service of a Government built on Treason and Rebellion, till their Misery awakens their own Consciences to do Justice to their injur'd Monarch, and to restore him, whom they have abominably abjur'd.

And what Sort of People are these, you will say? I'll tell you, Gentlemen, these are Protestants, at least they say so—These are People that call themselves of the Church of *England*, and prophane the Name of that Church, with claiming a Relation to her—That pretend to claim a Right to *Britain's* Government, and want to be restored to a Capacity of destroying her.

These are the Generations we ought to fight against, and as I have often noted, you may know them by their very Outfides. Do but look at them, Gentlemen, as they go along Streets; do but see them in their Conversation, they have Joy and Gladness

in their Countenances, they have Satisfaction in their Faces. Ask one of them in the Street, what News? All is well, brave News, our Friends thrive every where; this damn'd Confederacy goes down, Heaven fights with them now, and we shall soon see them broke to pieces; 'tis all good News.—Sit by One of them at . . . *Coffee-House*, and look but in his Face, when he reads the News, you shall see him smile, you shall see something of Pleasure sit upon his Brow, particularly when he comes to those Disasters every good Man mourns.

'Tis a hard Case to tell the World, we have such Wretches among us; that there should be such Vipers nurs'd up in the Bosom of a Protestant Church, that *Britain* should breed, and Mercy indulge such Vultures, that tear the Bowels of their Benefactors.

But such there are, and never were they more visibly discover'd than now, and this Use may be made of it; now is the Time to know them, they want Government enough of themselves, and want to contain themselves a little, but they cannot; their Joy is too full, it breaks out in their very common Chat, and all the World must see it: Mark them then while they are so easie to be known, and you may manage them hereafter, for they are a most wretched and contemptible Party.

Miserable Creatures, who rejoyce in the Tears of their Country, and flatter themselves with the Hopes of our general Confusion—I am out of Fear, but that they will be disappointed in their Hopes, nor does all these Disasters amount to so much, as to put us out of Hope of the Restoration of all our Prospects; but horrid is the Joy of those Creatures, whose Smiles are rais'd by the Calamities of their Country.